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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
WEDNESDAY, Jan. 15, 2003
CONTACT: Bill Murlin, BPA (503) 230-5141

BPA issues new Kangley-Echo Lake transmission line project study

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Bonneville Power Administration has issued its supplemental draft environmental impact statement on the proposed Kangley-Echo Lake transmission line project in King and Kittitas counties. After examining several possible routes, the statement identifies as the preferred alternative the one that parallels the existing transmission line through the Cedar River Municipal Watershed east of Seattle.

“BPA is proposing this reinforcement project to ensure reliable electricity delivery into the Puget Sound area and to return energy to Canada under treaty obligation,” said Lou Driessen, project manager. “Years of growth in the area have overtaxed the existing system.”

In response to public concern, BPA supplemented the draft EIS. It provides a detailed look at suggested alternate routes for the project, including alternatives that were not considered in detail in the original draft statement issued in June 2001.

BPA examined four possible routes outside the Cedar River Municipal Watershed and analyzed their possible costs and impacts and the steps needed to mitigate those impacts. In addition, BPA examined a variety of nonconstruction alternatives such as demand-side management, distributed generation, additional large generation and conservation that might defer or eliminate the need for a new transmission line. The study found that these would not be adequate to meet needs.

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“The preferred option of crossing the watershed appears to be the least costly, takes the least time to build and, with extensive mitigation measures, has the least environmental impact of any alternative we studied,” said Driessen.

BPA officials said that, if the agency ultimately decides to build the line through the Cedar River watershed, the agency would mitigate for any impacts to the fish and wildlife resources of the watershed and ensure protection for the water quality of the Cedar River. BPA has agreed to use construction techniques that would keep impacts very minimal.

The supplemental draft EIS is now available for a 45-day public review and comment period, and four public meetings have been scheduled.

- Feb. 3, 12 p.m.- 4 p.m., Mount Si Senior Center, 411 Main Ave. South, North Bend
- Feb. 4, 4 p.m.- 8 p.m., Seattle Center Rainier Room, 305 Harrison St., Seattle
- Feb. 5, 4 p.m.- 8 p.m., Maple Valley Community Center, 22010 S.E. 248th St., Maple Valley
- Feb. 6, 4 p.m.- 8 p.m., Tahoma High School, 18200 S.E. 240th St., Covington.

A technical meeting to discuss the nontransmission alternatives will be held from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Feb. 4 in the Seattle Center Rainier Room, 305 Harrison St., Seattle, Wash.

BPA is accepting comments on the supplemental draft environmental impact statement until March 1, 2003. After considering the comments, BPA will prepare and issue its final environmental impact statement, which is scheduled for release around July 1, 2003.

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